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ABSTRACT

A need for more concerted attention to career development in corrections was shown by interviews with eight psychologists, educators, and administrators who have worked in career development in corrections; site visits at two state prisons, one federal prison, and the Department of Corrections; and a review of literature. A limited amount of research demonstrates that comprehensive programming focusing on career development issues can reduce recidivism rates. Although much of the research is old, the literature demonstrates the need for such programming in prison settings and provides practical programming considerations for persons interested in this area. A variety of counseling theories and interventions for working with the prison population are considered, and current programs targeting career issues are described. (The paper contains 27 references.) (KC)

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Developing Career Programs in Corrections: Where to Begin?

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Developing Career Programs in Corrections: Where to Begin?

Abstract

Currently there is a need for more concerted attention to career development in corrections. Limited research has demonstrated that comprehensive programming focusing on career development issues is a method by which recidivism rates may be reduced. The current literature review explains and clarifies the need for such programming in prison settings and provides practical programming considerations for individuals interested in this area. A variety of counseling theories and interventions for working with this population are considered. Current programs targeting career issues are described in addition to an explanation of the limited history of career programming in corrections. Also included are potential resources and implications for practitioners.

Developing Career Programs in Corrections: Where to Begin?

Over a period of several months, I engaged in a research endeavor to determine the resources and programs that currently exist to aid incarcerated offenders in their career development. In reading literature spanning the topics of career development and corrections, I discovered that there is a great need for additional career related services for this population. While there are a variety of vocational education programs currently in existence, employability skills and career guidance appear to be inadequate.

During the course of this research, I conducted informational interviews with eight psychologists, educators, and administrators who have worked in this area. I conducted site visits at two state prisons, one federal prison, and the Department of Corrections in one state, and gained a variety of perspectives on both the current status and future prognosis of career issues in corrections. I incorporated what I learned from the literature and individuals in the field to begin designing a hypothetical proposal for a career development program in corrections.

Program Development Considerations

In this paper, I share what I have learned from research with others who may be interested in this area. I used a variety of sources in this research, including documents (ERIC, Internet-based literature search engines, etc.), a large number of journal articles, and the network of individuals I developed to ascertain additional sources of relevant literature. The information in this paper is presented in a question-answer format. Topics covered include an explanation of the need for career development programs in corrections, unique characteristics of the prison population/setting that must be taken into consideration, appropriate and effective counseling theories/interventions, a history of career programming and description of current programs, and implications of this research for practitioners.

Is there evidence of a need for career programs in corrections?

Yes, and the evidence is abundant. Prison overcrowding and high recidivism rates plague our nation as the revolving door of the criminal justice system continues to turn for a large number of convicted individuals. Researchers have estimated recidivism rates ranging from 60% to 80% ("Crime Wave," 1975; Zivan, 1975, as cited in Enocksson, 1981). It is helpful to frame this problem in terms of a gap, conceptualized as the discrepancy between the existing state of affairs and a more desired state (Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991). While there have been some efforts to decrease recidivism through rehabilitation of inmates, it has become apparent that current efforts are inadequately solving the problem and this gap continues to persist.

Career development is not being used to remedy the recidivism gap. Career, defined by Super (as cited in Herr & Cramer, 1996, p.32) as "the course of events which constitutes a life . . . the series of remunerated and non-remunerated positions occupied by a person from adolescence through retirement, of which occupation is only one." appears to be an alien concept in corrections. Indeed, career encompasses all elements of an individual's life, including education, work, family, leisure, and community activities. It is logical that career development, encompassing changes in several areas of a person's life, be used as a focal point in reducing recidivism.

Enocksson (1981, p.9) observed that "work is perhaps the most important determinant of a successful adjustment to life." As such, it should be a force in helping offenders grow, change, and avoid returning to prison. An undeniable need exists in helping former offenders obtain a job and remain employed, as evidenced by the disproportionate unemployment and poverty rates of this population (Khatibi & Grande, 1993). Research has demonstrated that those who have

not met with success in the working world have a greater tendency to return to crime and to correctional institutions (Enocksson, 1981).

The prison system lags far behind other institutional settings in acknowledging the important role career development plays in the lives of all individuals. The vast majority of current programs in prisons emphasize vocational skill development to the detriment of career guidance and growth. What appears to be missing is the recognition that effective career/vocational education programs must provide opportunities for basic skill development while, simultaneously, teaching employability skills essential for the attainment of a job once released into the community (Khatibi & Grande, 1993). Such programs would enable inmates to develop strategic career plans, structuring their working lives based upon knowledge of their interests, values, skills, and their options in the work force. This, in essence, is the value of an effective career development program.

Incarcerated individuals, the criminal justice system, and the world as a whole would benefit from the infusion of career development services and corrections. Once released into society, many ex-convicts find themselves in an extremely difficult position. Ryan (1974) found that incarcerated individuals have not received appropriate training for their vocational, avocational, family, community, and citizenship responsibilities. They do not have the knowledge and skills required to seek a rewarding and legal job that appropriately matches their interests, values, and skills. As such, the trend is to fall back into illegal activity as a result of failing to identify other life/career options and eventually to end up back in the prison system. This trend could be halted through concerted efforts to create a career guidance and development program that is applicable across institutions, targeted at reducing recidivism and empowering ex-offenders with the skills and knowledge to seek, obtain, and keep a satisfying job.

When provided the opportunities to grow and change through an organized program emphasizing career development issues, self-support and socially acceptabie lifestyles become increasingly attainable (Enocksson, 1981). Ninety-five percent of offenders will return to free society after serving time in prison (Halleck & White, 1977, as cited in Enocksson, 1981). Taggart (1972, as cited in Enocksson, 1981) insists that "unless something positive is done while the offender is under public control, his problems can only be complicated further by incarceration." Until correctional institutions take responsibility for promoting change in their population through viable, career-related interventions, we can expect that the recidivism gap will not be removed.

What unique characteristics of the prison population and prison setting must be taken into consideration in designing career programs?

The incarcerated population has characteristics that distinguish it from the population of citizens in most other social institutions. The prison population is marked by a substantially larger proportion of individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder (or characteristics of this personality temperament) than the general population. Such individuals tend to be more difficult to rehabilitate; some might even characterize them as "untreatable." Individuals in prison tend to suffer from a lack of an internal system of rules and extremely high impulsiveness. These individuals tend to be unemployed and have histories of unsuccessful and unrewarding employment. Incarcerated individuals do not choose to be in prison. This must be taken into consideration in determining the expectations and goals of a career development program for offenders.

There are a variety of unique attributes of corrections settings that must be taken into consideration in programming. The prison system is largely a closed system with little

permeability to/exchange with the outside environment. Prison institutions tend to be extremely hesitant to change with developing technology and world trends. They are extremely rule bound, and tend to lack flexibility and innovation. Security and safety are basic concerns. The prison setting is plagued by the seemingly insurmountable dichotomy between punishment and rehabilitation. It is difficult to convince public officials of the need for program funding for offender growth and change in the face of strong support for an "eye for an eye" retributional philosophy. Prisons are often marked by internal strife, dishonesty, and a variety of other personnel issues. All of these factors must be taken into consideration in developing programs for this population.

What counseling interventions/theories have been found to work best with offenders and serve as the basis of career programming?

While there is some difference of opinion in terms of the most effective counseling methods for working with offenders, the majority of individuals in the field emphasize the use of some type of cognitive-behavioral (Corey, 1996) approach. As with other challenging clients, the techniques (or lack thereof) associated with humanistic, existential and person-centered approaches (Corey, 1996) provide too little structure and direction to be successful in working with offenders.

Hunter (1994) stressed the importance of using cognitive therapy (Corey, 1996) in working with offenders. In order to solve any serious problem, one must describe the problem in clear terms, come up with alternatives to solve the problem, choose the most appropriate alternative, and execute this option with perseverance (Zamble & Porporino, 1990, as cited in Hunter, 1994). These tasks, all cognitive in nature, are seen as essential first steps to problem resolution for offenders. The treatment program described by Hunter (1994) centered around

Ellis' rational-emotive behavior therapy (Corey, 1996) and its usefulness in helping individuals objectively challenge their choices in order to begin the process of change. Results of this study highlight the effectiveness of cognitive treatment modalities for working with offenders with substance abuse issues. It seems logical that this mode of therapy would be equally effective in working with incarcerated persons to make change in other areas of their lives.

According to Gendreau (1995), the vast majority of intervention techniques utilized with the offender population are centered around operant conditioning. He cited the importance of positive reinforcement for desirable behaviors, and the use of modeling, token economies, and cognitive-behavior therapy in order to change the behavior of offenders. In a book review, Gannon (1995) reported that interventions with offenders reduce recidivism on average by 10%. Interventions that are cognitive-behavioral in nature may lessen recidivism by 30% or more, which provides further evidence of the effectiveness of such treatment methods in creating positive and lasting change for this population.

Cohen and Sordo (1984) reported that reality therapy (Corey, 1996) has been employed in corrections settings in an effort to empower offenders to gain responsibility for and control of their own behavior. Reality therapy provides the means for offenders to take responsibility for their past actions and learn to base their behavior on honesty, responsibility, and personal competence. Several techniques of reality therapy have been taught to parents, spouses, girlfriends/boyfriends, teachers, correctional personnel, and others involved in the lives of incarcerated persons in order to assist counseling professionals in the therapeutic process. In this respect, this mode of therapy appears to be an appropriate method to ensure long-term change that persists after release from prison.

R. Smith (personal communication, March 1, 1999) is a firm believer in the appropriateness and utility of the counseling method that he co-founded with V. Lombardo in 1979, rational cognitive therapy. This therapeutic modality is similar to rational-emotive behavior therapy and cognitive-behavior therapy in its theoretical bases. Rational cognitive therapy emphasizes good decision making in regards to leisure activities, money management, and interpersonal relationships, which will enable an individual to function well in society (and "get to work"). Evidence of the effectiveness of this counseling method for the offender population was demonstrated in a research study demonstrating that nine out of ten offenders who were taught to better manage relationships, money, leisure activities, and religious activities did not return to prison, in contrast to nine out of ten offenders with undeveloped skills in these areas--who returned to prison after release. (Jenkins, Witherspoon, Nichols, Lawrence, & McKee, 1975, as cited in Smith & Lombardo, 1995).

Azrin and Philip (1979) describe the Job Club method of assisting individuals in their career development. This method is based upon a behavioral approach, citing interpersonal skills, a "social information network"(Jones & Azrin, 1973, as cited in Azrin & Philip, 1979, p.144), motivation, and inadequate employment skills as the important elements of obtaining employment. Research on the efficacy of the Job Club program has led to the conclusion that this intensive method is appropriate for all "hard-core" unemployed individuals, including offenders. The theory underlying this approach emphasizes operant consequences and stimulus antecedents as determinants of behavior (Skinner, 1938; 1953, as cited in Azrin & Philip, 1979). The Job Club approach is extremely directive in nature, and includes a structured meeting schedule, a variety of individual activities, and group member support. The Job Club method was described by Azrin, Flores, and Kaplan (1975, p.26) as "the first controlled demonstration

that a job counseling program is more effective than the usual unstructured job-seeking." This method of assisting employment handicapped individuals resulted in 95% of Job Club individuals obtaining a job as opposed to 28% of non-involved individuals over six months (Azrin & Philip, 1979).

While not a traditional counseling technique, Romig and Gruenke (1991) proposed an intriguing and potentially effective means of working with individuals in a correctional environment. These researchers emphasize the utility of using metaphors with inmates in order to deal with inmate resistance by permitting clients full command over their emotions and cognitions. When inmates are not pointedly asked to answer questions in terms of their personal experiencing they are more likely to provide information than when individually and directly targeted. Framing concepts in terms of stories may elicit emotions that might not have been discussed in a direct way (Romig & Gruenke, 1991). As such, metaphors maintain the pride and personal control of individuals in this setting while helping them get to the core of their concerns and experiences and express underlying feelings without even realizing what they are doing.

In contrast to much of the literature on counseling theories appropriate for work with this population, Mabli and Faherty (1981) included Rogerian group counseling (Corey, 1996) among the counseling modalities used in a federal correctional setting. In this setting, a blend of reality therapy, behavior contracting, Gestalt techniques (Corey, 1996), and transactional analysis were utilized. This theoretical integration is based on the inherent ability to gear rehabilitative efforts toward each offender's individual needs.

In designing a career development program for prisoners, it is essential to focus on helping inmates take steps to produce tangible changes in their lives and careers. Hands-on activity, concrete materials, and directions are necessary for such a program to be successful. A

program development perspective based upon cognitive-behavioral theory (along with some elements of rational therapy) would be the most appropriate in this situation. Helping inmates learn how negative thoughts related to their careers and other elements of their lives preclude them from achieving positive change is an important task of all career development programs for this population. Further, teaching inmates the steps in looking for, acquiring, and keeping a job are all elements of a successfully developed career development program. Taking responsibility for their mistakes and their lives is an important element of rational therapy that would be useful in designing a career development program for this population. Drawing from the cognitive-behavioral perspective, it would be important to help inmates identify their problems and concerns, develop solutions, and promote positive change. Only when they are able to utilize their cognitive skills to recognize their problems will their behavior and careers begin to change in a positive way.

What is the history of career development in corrections?

There is little history to be told of career programming for the offender population. Isolated programs targeting the career development needs of incarcerated persons exist in selected prison settings, but there does not appear to be a general commitment to this sort of programming. There is no reflection in the literature of policy targeting the career needs of this population; although, there may exist approved policies that have never been enforced. In addition, innovative programs expressly targeting these needs may exist in some corrections settings, or may currently be in process. It is hoped that the future of career programming in corrections will be more varied, energized, and progressive than the past.

What career development programs exist in corrections or have been reported in the literature?

There is considerable research literature regarding prison programs, both current and past. However, the vast majority of these reports target issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, anger management, education, medical or psychiatric issues, and stress management. I located sixteen articles on correctional programs with a career/vocational component, in comparison to the vastly higher number of reports of programs targeting different issues. Programs geared toward life skills, such as vocational development, are more the exception than the rule. Under 25% of jails in the US have educational programs (Coffey, 1982, as cited in Diem & Knoll, 1982), and of those that do, only 13% have vocational education programs (American Correctional Association, 1978, as cited in Diem & Knoll, 1982). Such statistics make it alarmingly obvious that education is among the lowest priorities of the correctional system (at least as evidenced in city and county jails).

While the initiation of such programs is a step in the right direction, research does not persistently demonstrate results in truly rehabilitating offenders and decreasing recidivism. Perhaps this is because the vocational programs fail to meet the real needs of this population. A program that would be the most effective in creating lifelong change in this population would target work as the center of life, involving not only methods to obtain a job but skills to keep a job and behaviors appropriate in the workplace. At the present time, there does not appear to be reports of optimum programs achieving all of these goals, although a few such programs achieve some of these ends.

Carlson (1995) described the "Educational and Behavior Modification" programs offered at the Nebraska Center for Women. In this correctional facility, the programs perceived by inmates to be the most helpful were General Education Equivalency (GED), Adult Basic

Education (ABE), Parenting Programs, Life Skills/Cognitive Self Change, HIV/AIDS Education, and Religion. The unfortunate finding was that Pre-Employment Counseling in Other States and Thinking Errors/Decision Making Skills did not receive inmate votes as being among the top four programs offered.

De Lone (1990, as cited in Lipton, 1995) suggested that poor education and unemployment have historically been linked to delinquency, criminal behavior, and recidivism (although the precise relationship has been called into question). Regardless, the relative importance of educational and vocational programs need to be researched in more depth to determine their effectiveness in decreasing recidivism.

Prison programs are generally evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in achieving a custodial and rehabilitative goal. As vocational training has been largely considered a rehabilitative program, it may be that its contributions to the achievement of the correctional system's custodial goals have been overlooked (Gleason, 1986). One study demonstrated that vocational training helps individuals find a job quickly after release but the probability of this job being a full-time position with a real possibility for advancement was questioned (Gleason, 1986). In terms of the custodial purposes of vocational training programs, inmates recognized that vocational training led them to qualify for better work assignments, participate in work-pass programs, and was an enjoyable way to stay busy, make positive changes in themselves, and earn respect. In terms of achieving the rehabilitative goals of a correctional institution, inmates perceived their involvement in such a program to be a method for self-improvement, led them to be interested in the skill they were learning, and made them confident that they would stay out of prison once released. Such recognitions are evidence that inmates are aware of both the short-term (custodial) and long-term (rehabilitative) effects of vocational programs (Gleason, 1986). It

is essential for policy makers to recognize that the value of vocational programs in prisons is two-fold, improving lives during incarceration and post-release.

Wilson (1994) studied the role of vocational education in decreasing the recidivism rates of juvenile delinquents. Findings of his study demonstrated that the recidivism rate for youth involved in vocational training programs was significantly lower than those not participating. In addition, individuals involved in this training program had higher earnings and more positive attitudes about vocational and work experience than those who chose not to participate.

Erez (1987) suggested that offenders' perceptions regarding different elements of the correctional system have a direct impact on their own rehabilitation. Studies of programs in state prison systems have demonstrated that one out of every four or five inmates participated in treatment programs targeting their identified needs (including job training and education) (Petersilia, 1979, as cited in Erez, 1987). Eighty-seven percent of inmates studied demonstrated an interest in academic or vocational programs to help them post-release. These inmates perceived their overriding problem to be an inability to legally compete in the job market, consequently leading to their criminal activities. Erez (1987) concluded that programs providing marketable vocational and occupational skills for inmates may improve their attitudes while incarcerated and diminish the likelihood of further criminal activity.

In one minimum-security co-correctional environment, inmates are permitted to slowly transition back to society by spending some time in "middle ground" between complete incarceration and true freedom. Work- and study-release status served as enticing reminders to behave appropriately in this setting and met with success. Program participants rated programs based in the education department as most valuable, followed by change-agent group counseling, transactional analysis, and women's groups. Not to be forgotten, however, were high school

equivalency preparation courses, college-study release, and individual vocational counseling. Participants interviewed presented healthy attitudes toward work and their pending reintegration into the community. Mabli and Faherty (1981, p.50) concluded that "criminals *can and do* change if provided with the opportunity."

According to Enocksson (1980), the central goal of correctional programs should be to augment the employability of offenders. The best manner to achieve this goal is through educational and vocational training coupled with counseling and placement services. "Work is an obvious and practical focus for any attempt to help the offender and perhaps should be a primary focus" (Enocksson, 1980). This is further substantiated by the fact that 90% of inmates are males between the ages of 18 and 45, an age at which nine out of ten males are typically employed. As nine out of ten inmates have been incarcerated for stealing money or property (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1977, as cited in Enocksson, 1980), their criminal activities are at least partially explained by their inability to find and keep a job. Research findings have demonstrated that felons who have failed in the working world are more likely to turn to crime and more likely to recidivate post-release.

Enocksson (1980) blames the typical work issues faced by offenders as a result of a lack of sufficient educational and vocational skills. Educational achievement of offenders is lower than that of the general population. The possession of marketable skills is rare; however, research has shown that an ex-offender with marketable skills will face less resistance to his/her criminal record by a potential employer (Bennight, 1975, as cited in Enocksson, 1980). Enocksson (1980) suggests that an accreditation system be developed to ensure the quality of instruction in vocational training programs. It is essential that vocational programs teach

relevant skills for the current job market and that program participants are selected based on motivation for change.

A unique method of vocational rehabilitation for offenders is provided through the "Three-in-one apartment" run through the Israeli Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority (Hoffman, 1998). As a part of this program, a young, single ex-offender is placed in an apartment with two university students. The goal of this arrangement is to rehabilitate offenders and simplify their transition back into society. While living with the students, the offender learns proper work habits, budget management, how to do household tasks, and the interpersonal skills necessary to live with others. Hoffman (1998) has found that this program helps the ex-convicts while, simultaneously, creating a community-based support system for their readjustment to society.

A special element of the CHOICE Program (Walters, Heffron, Whitaker, & Dial, 1992) for drug-involved federal offenders is the role of vocational/educational efforts. The primary goal of the program is to teach and encourage responsible behavior, including the development of decision-making skills, teaching social/coping skills, challenging thoughts, beliefs and values, and helping individuals find socially acceptable alternatives to criminal activity (Walters, Heffron, Whitaker, & Dial, 1992). Participants receive credit towards graduation from the program for, among other things, successfully finishing a college or vocational course and obtaining positive work evaluations. This program could be utilized as a model within prison systems to promote the incorporation of career/vocational issues into existing program offerings. Prison systems lacking resources for a program solely focused upon career issues might consider integrating career programming into existing programs.

Fischer, Williams, Byington, and Lonsdale (1996) discussed the involvement of career development issues in a sexual addict/offender program. Research has demonstrated that a large

problem for sexual addicts/offenders is being employed in work settings that are not a good match for them (presumably based upon their personality styles, interests, values, and skills), resulting in an inability to control sexual behaviors (Carnes, 1983, as cited in Fischer, et al., 1996). These researchers insist that an employment component is necessary in a successful relapse prevention program for sexual addicts/offenders. Included in such a program would be a focus upon life management skills (problem solving, stress management, cognitive therapy, communication skills, and social skills), increasing awareness of cognitive distortions, and challenging and changing self-talk in an effort to correct distortions (Fischer, Williams, Byington, & Lonsdale, 1996).

Homant (1984) cites a great deal of research demonstrating that the quantity and quality of employment of ex-offenders positively correlates more with parole success than any other factor. Homant (1984) cites Potter, who insists that a great amount of effort has been put into improving both the quality and quantity of prison programs resulting from this strong correlation, and the known difficulty of offenders in obtaining work. Weiderlanders (1981, as cited in Homant, 1984) believes programs targeting the employment issues of ex-offenders are focused on the wrong things. According to him, effective training would involve how to get along with co-workers, how to keep a less than exhilarating job long enough to be promoted, how to use informal peer networks for support, and how to acquire on the job or part-time training to increase future opportunities. Programs have been unsuccessful due to their narrow focus on environmental and situational variables while failing to consider appropriate individual and personality variables. Homant (1984) describes the "ideal program" as one that incorporates the enhancement of a specific skill (related to social adjustment, such as anger control, assertiveness, or vocational/educational skills), seeks to minimize prisonization effects, and considers the

individual's self-esteem level, seeking to raise it once prisonization is low. Such employment programs should focus upon increasing individual's job readiness in order to raise self-esteem.

Diem and Knoll (1982) analyzed the Coordinated Community Offender Employment Program (also known as "The World of Work") in one county jail which focused upon work and life skills for inmates approaching release. The researchers found that the material involved in such a program must match the age and experience of participants and must be relevant to life in the community. In addition, classes must be structured to provide the opportunity for a great deal of individual attention and hands-on learning.

Gerber and Fritsch (1995) sought to counter the argument that nothing works in prisons, and argued that adult education in prison has the potential to diminish recidivism, increase educational enrollment, improve work options post-release, and diminish disciplinary problems during incarceration. In reviewing the literature on the topic, Gerber and Fritsch (1995) concluded that participation in high school level academic programs during incarceration resulted in improved employment histories and post-release education. Studies of college education and recidivism have demonstrated a fairly consistent negative correlation. However, due to the unfortunately weak methodologies of many of these studies (and mixed findings), the results are deemed tentative at best while more research remains to be conducted. Much of the research targeting vocational education programs in prisons points to positive effects including better institutional adjustment, more positive parole experiences (not having parole evoked), and a greater likelihood of holding a job after release, in addition to the positive outcomes described earlier. Linden and Perry (1984, as cited in Gerber & Fritsch, 1995) found that successful programs are comprehensive and demanding, establish an alternative community within the prison, and provide additional services for individuals who have returned to the community.

Gerber and Fritsch (1995) further cite attracting the right program participants and targeting skills relevant to the job market as requisites for effective vocational/educational programs in prison.

Perhaps a richer source of data on career development programs in corrections currently in existence may be found in an analysis of the programs that are currently running in institutions across the country. Individuals representing a variety of institutions were contacted in the completion of this research endeavor and a number of site visits were made to selected prisons. A general idea of current programs may be gleaned from the information obtained in information interviews.

At one state prison with a 90 bed inpatient mental health unit (in addition to regular outpatient services), a life/social skills program for the chronic population of mentally retarded/chronic schizophrenic inmates was studied. This program included vocational elements such as reading/writing skills, filling out applications, interviewing, and appropriate hygiene. The Life After Prison group at this institution was geared toward those transitioning from the in-patient to the out-patient setting, as they approached the date of their release from prison. This group encompasses select elements of career development/planning, but perhaps not enough (N. Carter, personal communication, February 23,1999).

R. Smith (personal communication, March 1, 1999) reported his experiences in assisting incarcerated individuals to learn the skills involved in going to work, which included teaching them how to read, how to get up on time, get in the shower, eat, get on the bus, and get to work on time. This work was conducted through the Manpower Development and Training Act, later the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), and recently the JTPA (Jobs Training and Partnership Act). This researcher also chaired a program that trains offenders and their

families to better work within the community. The focus was on finding jobs for the offenders, and then learning how to handle coworkers who might provoke them (R. Smith, personal communication, March 1, 1999).

Programs provided in the institutions of a southwestern state prison system included skill acquisition groups, activities of daily living, and occupational therapy (including job-hunting/job-search skills, social skills, and personal skills). Unfortunately, the career development/guidance and employment groups were completely separate from mental health services and those offered in the school system. Institutions in this prison system had a "habilitation" department in which individuals were taught skills they lack and for which they do not have the readiness to be rehabilitated (C. Giles, personal communication, March 1, 1999) -- a department in which employment skills training might be extremely appropriate.

Across a number of state prisons, the Life After Prison group currently attempts to fulfill some of the career development needs of offenders. This program is for inmates who will be released within two to three months and largely focuses on relapse prevention. This program is based on the assumption that career issues are not a concern for inmates at the beginning or middle of their incarceration as the pain related to work issues is not great enough to promote action. However, a few months prior to release, framing this group in terms of a link to staying free has been considerably successful. When M. Railey (personal communication, March 3, 1999) ran this group he focused upon career exploration, writing cover letters and sending them out, values clarification, using the Self-Directed Search (SDS) (Holland, Powell, and Fritzsche, 1994) to assess interests and skills, and group counseling. The degree to which these elements continue to be emphasized in this group is unknown.

It is apparent that selected institutions across the nation are making some effort to incorporate career development into their programming. What remains missing is a determination of the "state of the art" in offender vocational programs. While the majority of programs tend to focus upon vocational skills training, it seems that there is a growing recognition of the importance of career-related issues in affecting change in offenders. While this is a step in the right direction, a great deal remains to be done in transforming the available programs in prisons from a skills training approach to a career development approach. The importance of decision making, interpersonal skills, values, interests, and skills, and the role of self-esteem, motivation, and job-readiness may not be undermined. For actual change to be realized, these important issues must be recognized and incorporated into prison programs. Until that goal is achieved, it is likely that studies will continue to find a lack of change in recidivism or any other effectiveness measure.

What are the implications of this research for a practitioner interested in career programming in corrections?

Practitioners interested in this area must recognize the inherent generalizability of interventions used with other special populations to meet the career related needs of the prison population and vice-versa. Programs developed for this population can be adapted to fit the needs of other special populations, such as juvenile delinquents, welfare moms and dads, displaced homemakers, immigrants, substance abusers, individuals in rehabilitation settings, chronically unemployed individuals, school drop-outs, and teenage mothers. In addition, interventions designed for use with individuals in such populations may be used in programs for the offender population. One might utilize interventions that have been used with clients with

limited education, such as the Self-Directed Search (Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1994) Form E, in developing career programs for offenders.

Interaction with individuals representative of a variety of perspectives on corrections is essential in developing and implementing career programs for this population. Such individuals one might seek to involve in a programming endeavor include psychologists in the state/federal prison systems, educators in colleges/universities, and administrators in corrections. Getting involved with special interest groups in corrections and counseling (such as the International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors, IAAOC) and contacting individuals whose work with this population is cited in the literature are additional means of obtaining contacts to support programming endeavors. As prisons tend to be closed systems, it is of additional importance for practitioners to find a way into the system, perhaps through volunteering or serving as an unpaid consultant. In order to achieve this goal, it is essential for practitioners to refine their skills in professional networking and determination.

Summary and Conclusions

There are a number of sources of information that could be considered in designing a comprehensive career development program in corrections. I used a variety of research methods in attempting to determine the current state of the art in this area, including analysis of the available research literature, discussions with individuals in the field, and personal site visits to a variety of institutions. A number of issues are considered in this paper, including a description/clarification of the need for comprehensive career development programs for offenders, unique characteristics of the prison population/setting that must be taken into account in programming, counseling theories/interventions that work with this population, a description of current programs (and the limited history of this area), and implications for practitioners.

It is undeniable that there is a need for a stronger emphasis on career development issues in corrections. The little research that currently exists in this area suggests that such programming is effective in reducing recidivism and improving the futures of ex-offenders. Continued research in this area will be necessary to further demonstrate the importance of career development in corrections. Currently, descriptions of comprehensive career development programs appear to be missing from the research literature. In completing this research, I found several reports in the literature dating back 15 to 25 years. My research was impeded by the lack of current information in this field. As such, it seems imperative that more research attention be directed to this area by those interested in both career development issues and counseling/educating offenders. A cooperative effort on the part of individuals representative of different schools of thought and research interests will be necessary.

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